

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 ACDA-07 SAJ-01 OMB-01 /077 W
-----231051 009786 /15

P R 231004Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6754
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMCONSUL MADRAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE COLOMBO 0652

E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS: PINT, CE
SUBJECT: SRI LANKA PM COMMENTS ON POLITICAL CHANGES

REF: COLOMBO 0641

1. IN A LENGTHY SPEECH ON FEBRUARY 19 ANALYZING THE
CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN SRI LANKA, PRIME MINISTER
BANDARANAIKE EXPRESSED NO PUBLIC CONCERN OVER THE
DEFECTION THE PREVIOUS WEEK OF FIVE PARTY MEMBERS AND THE RESIGNATION
ON THE SAME DAY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY FROM HER GOVERNMENT
(REFTEL). SHE ASSURED HER LISTENERS THAT HER SRI LANKA
FREEDOM PARTY (SLFP) WOULD SURVIVE SUCH DEFECTIONS AND
POINTED OUT THAT IN THE PAST SUCH DEFECTORS AND THE FRONTS
THEY FORMED HAVE DISAPPEARED. WHAT THE FRONTS
WERE AIMING AT 'SHE SAID' WAS TO HAND OVER POWER TO THE
UNITED NATIONAL PARTY. SHE STATED THAT ANOTHER ONE OR TWO MPS
MIGHT LEAVE THE PARTY BUT THAT SHE WAS NOT AT ALL BOTHERED.

2. REFERRING TO THE PROROGATION OF THE NATIONAL STATE ASSEMBLY,
SHE JUSTIFIED IT IN TERMS OF THE CONSTITUTIONALITY
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OF THE ACTION AND CLAIMED THAT IT WAS NOT TAKEN OUT OF FEAR OF
THE OPPOSITION'S NO CONFIDENCE MOTION THAT WAS TO HAVE BEEN
DEBATED FEB. 17. SHE SAID THAT THE NSA WOULD MEET ON MAY 19,
3 DAYS PRIOR TO ITS STATUTORY
DISSOLUTION, TO PASS SOME IMPORTANT BILLS (BANK
NATIONALIZATION AND A TAKEOVER OF TEMPLE LANDS HAVE
BEEN MENTIONED ELSEWHERE AS HER PRIORITY BILLS).

3. IN HER ONLY REPORTED REFERENCE TO THE LAPSE LAST WEEK OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY, SHE WARNED THAT HER GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT HESITATE TO REINVOKE THE EMERGENCY IF ANYONE TRIED TO CREATE CHAOS IN SRI LANKA.

4. SHE ALSO ALLEGED THAT HER GOVERNMENT WAS NOT APPRECIATED BY THE BIG POWERS, BECAUSE OF HER ESPOUSAL OF AN INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE. SHE SAID THAT BOTH AMERICA AND RUSSIA WANTED TO USE THE INDIAN OCEAN FOR MILITARY PURPOSES AND THEREFORE WOULD LIKE TO SEE A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT.

5. COMMENT: THIS WAS ONE OF THE PM'S CASUAL STUMP SPEECHES IN A RURAL ELECTORATE WHERE SHE OCCASIONALLY SPEAKS AS IF HER WORDS WILL NOT BE HEARD IN COLOMBO AND BEYOND. WE ASSUME THAT THE 70-MINUTE SPEECH WAS MOSTLY EXTEMPORANEOUS AND CONTAINED SOME COMMENTS SHE MIGHT NOT HAVE MADE AFTER MORE CAREFUL THOUGHT. WE SUGGEST HER WORDS BE CONSIDERED IN THAT LIGHT.
REED

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Message Attributes

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